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REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claims 12-22 are now pending.

Claims 12-18, 21, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nishioka et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,457,004 (Nishioka).

An important feature of the present invention is the retention of evaluations by the user as to whether search results obtained from a series of retrieval operations are desirable, as well as the retention of the search conditions generated by the system side based on the decisions so that the search conditions may be re-used from the view point of conducting re-retrieval operations. To emphasize this feature of the invention, the independent claims have been amended to expressly set forth that the document retrieval involves a series of document retrieval processes including a plurality of retrieval operations, wherein the storage of a search condition is performed after an update based on a user evaluation, in addition to the search conditions that have been stored in connection with previous retrieval operations, and wherein storage of a search result based on the search

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condition after the update is stored in addition to the search results that have been stored in connection with previous retrieval operations conducted before the update. Further, the independent claims have been amended to emphasize that the storage of a search history storing information on a history of the search conditions and information on a history of the search results is stored with a correspondence among the history of search conditions, history of search results, evaluation, and identifier of a document subjected to the evaluation.

Nishioka is directed to a document retrieval assisting method or service in which results of search queries are displayed in two display areas positioned close to each other. The search results include a list of retrieved documents displayed in one of the areas, and topic words extracted from the retrieved documents reflecting the search results, displayed in a list or graph style to include an indication of a degree of relevance between the topic words, in the other display area. In this way, the search results are directly displayed in a display area adjacent to the display area showing the topic words, which are displayed to indicate the degree of relevancy. See, for example, Figs. 3 and 6 and the corresponding discussion.

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Nishioka's scheme is intended to permit users to associate individual information, such as a title list, resulting from a search with an overview of the search results so that the search results can be efficiently analyzed. In accordance with the analysis, the user can improve the search parameters to thereby improve the search results. Thus, a primary object of Nishioka is to make it possible for the user to be able to analyze the associated search results and overview thereof so as to more readily retrieve a set of documents considered to be highly related to a document of interest.

Structurally, Nishioka appears to disclose storage areas, including a retrieval request storage area for temporarily storing search conditions. However, Nishioka neither discloses nor suggests to store search histories for re-use, as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

The Applicants have reviewed the passages of Nishioka specifically cited by the Examiner, in particular the passage from column 10, line 60, through column 11, line 31, which broadly sets forth features of user side storage and information provider side processing programs. The passage neither discloses nor suggests the retention of search conditions, search results, or search history, or a

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correspondence among this information and a user evaluation as claimed in the independent claims. If the Examiner persists in finding anticipation of the claims in the Nishioka reference, the Applicants respectfully request an indication with greater specificity, those passages in the patent deemed to show the features of the claims.

In this regard, each of the dependent claims has been rejected with an emphasis on column 10, line 60 through column 11, line 31 of Nishioka, despite no suggestion in these passages of an evaluation history display step (Claim 13), a search result display step (Claim 14), a search condition restoration step (Claim 15), a search condition update step (Claim 16), a user evaluation erase step (Claim 17), or a search condition update step (Claim 18).

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable by Nishioka et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,457,004 (Nishioka) in view of Hatakeyama et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,220,625, (Hatakeyama). Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishioka et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,457,004 (Nishioka), in view of Diamond et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,269,368, (Diamond). Neither Hatakeyama nor Diamond, however, discloses or fairly suggests the features missing from Nishioka as discussed above. Therefore,

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necessarily, the combination of Nishioka with either Hatakeyama or Diamond cannot be said to render obvious the present invention.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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